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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001071

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [EFIN](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: SECURITY BUREAU REPORTS COUNTERTERRORISM
SUCSESSES, BUT WORK REMAINS

REF: A. KUWAIT 1069

[B](#). KUWAIT 1054

[C](#). KUWAIT 881

[D](#). KUWAIT 806

[E](#). KUWAIT 247

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: In a March 14 meeting with National Security Bureau President Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled, the Ambassador expressed appreciation for Kuwait's aggressive response to recent terror activities and stressed the need for Kuwait to sustain momentum in rounding up militants, amending laws related to terror activities, and stemming the flow of money between terrorists and their financiers. He reiterated that the U.S. is ready to assist Kuwait in training and would welcome bilateral discussions on terror financing. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled informed the Ambassador of a government-wide plan to combat terrorism which his bureau would coordinate. He said key elements of the plan involved reviewing existing laws on terrorism, defining "jihad," controlling charitable contributions, and educating Kuwait's youth. He confirmed Kuwait would assist the Palestinian people and agreed that Iran's interest in Iraq was cause for concern. The Ambassador also raised the importance of the resumption of Kuwaiti assistance to the Palestinian people and noted U.S. concerns about Iranian interference in Iraq. End Summary.

National Security Bureau to Coordinate CT Plan

[2](#). (C) Ambassador LeBaron opened his March 14 meeting with Kuwaiti National Security Bureau (NSB) President Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah by commending the GOK's aggressive response to recent terror incidents and asking for Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled's impressions on Kuwait's CT activities. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled reported that in a closed session of the National Assembly in February, Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah announced a 10-point plan of action and a three-year budget of 5.5M KD (nearly USD 19M) for CT activities. Implementation of the action plan involves the ministries of Interior, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Social Affairs and Labor, Information, Finance, Education, and Justice. NSB was tasked with coordination of the government's CT work and will review the individual action plans of each ministry, monitor intra-ministry coordination, and submit a monthly report to the Council of Ministers. Several committees had been formed under the leadership of various ministries to strengthen the oversight of charitable organizations and to review the range of laws on terrorism. Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled noted that a particular focus was narrowing the definition of "jihad" to prevent insurgents such as Hamed Al-Ali from pleading freedom of speech when inciting jihad. He added the GOK made it a priority to "concentrate on the hearts and minds of young people."

GOK Wants to Know Who's Behind the Terrorists

[3](#). (C) Commenting on the law enforcement aspect of Kuwait's CT activities, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said the raid on the Peninsula Lions cell yielded lots of useful information on terror cells (ref c). Although the GOK, in his opinion, has stayed one step ahead of the militants, unknown cells remain a potential threat, and he noted that Mohsen Al-Fadhli and Khaled Al-Dosari are still at large. The GOK was also targeting Kuwaitis in Iraq and Syria, with a goal of uncovering who recruited them, financed their travel, trained them, armed them, and harbored them. He was appreciative of information provided by post on four alleged Kuwaitis in U.S. custody in Iraq -- he confirmed two were indeed Kuwaiti nationals -- and said the GOK would investigate who facilitated their travel and assisted them.

Terror Financing Must Be a Priority

[4](#). (C) The Ambassador remarked that NSB's coordinating role was very important as a comprehensive CT strategy had many facets. He again offered training assistance as a way to sustain momentum in Kuwait's contributions to the Global War

on Terror. He said he was pleased to see the removal of illegal charity kiosks, a source of untraceable funds, and believed attacking terror financing was key to Kuwait's CT assault (ref c). The Ambassador further emphasized the need for a means to monitor cash flows out of the country. He explained the U.S. did not want to outlaw transfers, but rather encouraged the GOK to require declarations for large sums of money as a deterrent against cash flows for terror funding. He also recommended that the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of the Central Bank be able to share information promptly with other FIUs without seeking approval from the Public Prosecutor for each occurrence.

15. (C) Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled affirmed the GOK intended to focus on money laundering and money transfers, thus the February decision to join the UN Convention on the Suppression of Terror Financing, but commented that in the recent cases they investigated, money was transferred hand-to-hand (much of it from Saudi Arabia) and bank transactions were rare. Another complicating factor explained the Shaykh was the "khums," the annual donation the Shi'a community makes to its clerics. He reported that Kuwaiti Shi'a, targeted for their wealth, give one-fifth of their annual profits to religious leaders, including Sistani and Al Sadr, and there was no means to control how the funds were used. Another challenge, according to Shaykh Thamer Al-Sabah, the Office Director for Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled, was legitimate Kuwaiti charities whose overseas branches were operated by non-Kuwaitis. The GOK trusted the Kuwaiti proprietors, but learned the hard way in Afghanistan, that local staff could easily divert funds for other purposes. As a result, part of the action plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, was to play a formal role in the management of Kuwaiti charitable donations overseas. As an example, the Shaykh commended Saudi Arabia's use of UN organizations to disperse charitable contributions to the Palestinians, but said the system would not work in Kuwait because charities, although under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, operated independent of the government. (Note: The Ambassador commended the GOK decision to sign the Terror Financing Convention and encouraged the GOK to approve the last of the 12 international terrorism conventions: the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. Shaykh Thamer reported March 15 that the GOK deposited the convention with the UN in April 2004 (ref a). End Note.)

Iran, Iraq, and the PA

16. (C) Turning to regional issues, Shaykh Sabah Al-Khaled said Kuwait would fulfill its financial obligations to the Palestinian people and looked forward to additional meetings with PA Finance Minister Salam Fayyad in order to assure that Kuwaiti assistance goes to the right places. On Iran, he said the GOK was aware of Iranian interference in Iraq prior to the elections, but could not confirm whether Iran continued to meddle, although he was certain Iran maintained an interest in the formation of the Iraqi Transitional Government (ref b). Continuing with Iran, he said that GOK and GOI had finally reached an agreement on a gas deal in which Iran will supply daily 300 million cubic feet of natural gas, but the water agreement was stalled (ref d). He voiced concern about the delay in forming the ITG, but agreed with the Ambassador that it was important for the General Assembly to meet March 16.

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